

four

quarters

- The Wilmots • Page 1
A Short Story by Alma Roberts Giordan
- Bird of Winter • Page 4
A Poem by Sarge D. Sterling
- Magazine • Page 5
A Short Story by Richard E. Fitzgerald
- Symposium on the Role of Art in Life — III • Page 8
Introduction by the Editors
- Practical Observations on the Development of a Taste for the Beautiful • Page 8
An Article by Philipp Fehl
 - Responses by Samuel Hazo, Irving L. Zupnick, Anthony Lauck, C.S.C., Ben Schleifer, Walter J. Ong, S.J., Sister M. Genevieve, R.S.M., Wilfrid Sheed, Rémy Saisselin, Gerhard Albersheim, Thomas P. McDonnell • Page 12
 - Ash Wednesday • Page 17
A Poem by Sister Mary Janet, S.C.L.
 - Our Lady of the Holy Cross Monastery, Berryville, Va. • Page 18
A Poem by Eugene J. Fitzgerald
 - Self-Portrait at Wellfleet • Page 19
A Poem by Charles Edward Eaton
 - The Love Story of Charlie Abernathy • Page 20
A Short Story by John J. Keenan
 - A Little Gentleman • Page 24
A Short Story by Robert A. Wiggins
 - The Trackwalker • Page 28
A Poem by George Herman
 - Tante Berenice • Page 29
A Short Story by Victor Chapin

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The Wilmots

● Alma Roberts Giordan

"It's no disgrace, girl," Dad said half-heartedly, edging me out. "To collect money earned by the sweat of your brow is not *dunning*." He knew I thought that word, common on bitter Depression tongues. We had the milkman to pay, the grocer, the coal man, the landlord—they didn't like the word either. "Be polite," he warned; "still, impress him that he owes the debt, old friend or no. Tell him ten dollars will do—to keep my credit at the lumberyard."

I hated this twice-monthly commission. Because he was so obviously ashamed to push the issue, I felt a related shame in having to pursue it. It seemed unfair that I, being only eleven, should be forced to do what he would not, and his threadbare excuses and subterfuges galled me. It was "Do as I say, not do as I do," and a hard lump was in me, accepting.

Mother poked her head out the window. "Forget just ten dollars," she directed. "Try for the whole sum. We all need shoes."

Might as well try for the moon as for the entire balance of my father's carpentry bill. He'd done the job for a comrade up against it, as everyone else was in those days—not asking union wages, but working for a minimum amount above expenses. He wasn't certain, nor was I, whether Wilmot told the truth when he protested he didn't have cash at the moment, or if he had it and was bound to clutch it till the last dunning

shamed his fist open. I was inclined to believe he had it, though Dad said you couldn't tell so easily. Fine-appearing homes had to be kept up for the mortgage sake, and hiring labor didn't mean you had the wherewithal to pay labor. Farms were costly to maintain if they weren't vast, and a sick child cost more than five healthy ones. All I knew was that the Wilmots lived in a beautiful house, had a flower garden and livestock—especially detestable guinea hens—and but one child, who didn't go to school and didn't require the expensive clothing she wore. Because she didn't even know she had it.

"Well." Dad cleared his throat, coming out to the porch, he and I shifting feet with mutual indecision. "Get what you can. I can't be unreasonable. He might have work another time. If I strap him now, he'll never hire me again." Hands deep in his frayed pockets, Dad jingled loose coins against fence nails. The ring was false. A St. Joseph medal and a drilled dime made it so.

I kicked stones all the way to the Wilmots, frustrated by the knowledge I would fail and the fact that the visit would have to be repeated over and over still. I kicked stones that had guinea hen shapes, and mentally kicked Mrs. Wilmot's shins too. Barbara I did not kick. She was just a little older than myself, her face very white to my tan, her hair blond and long. Every morning it was arranged in neat sausage curls, but before noon it was a tangle hanging

across her face. Her eyes were doll-china blue, totally blank. She loped rather than walked and did not speak. She had a baby mentality and could be taught nothing more. Sound adult rumor whispered that she would die before she was thirteen. If she had a friend, I often thought, they just might communicate. Some miracle of understanding might bring her out of that vacuum. But I was never allowed to get close to her.

I came into the yard and was announced by the guinea hens. Their warning babel brought Mrs. Wilmot out before I could even say hello to Barbara. Her mother ran to where she sat smiling vacantly against the sunny south side of the house, wide-vizored bonnet askew on her tousled head. Mrs. Wilmot was like a guinea hen herself—she whirled on me, a small, plump woman transformed into a ruffled fury defending her chick. One pudgy arm flapped winglike, the other flung itself about the girl's limp shoulders. "What do you want?" she barked.

Barbara blinked in the sunshine, oblivious of my fear and her mother's anger. "I was sent to get some money for the work on the porch," I stammered.

"Oh," she said in relief, "you're Roger Stone's child. Well, I do have a few dollars—but it was for the feed man. Come into the entry while I get it."

She would not trust me alone with Barbara. I stood in the delphinium-guarded washroom, waiting for the handout that was due and overdue. She reappeared with a crumpled five dollar bill. Reluctant to part with it, she further questioned me: "You're sure your father said today, not next week? You're positive he said today?"

I would not beg. "Today." I riveted my eyes to the floor, scuffing at nothing with my worn shoe.

"Well, I s'pose poor Dick Meyer will wait for his feed money. Our credit's sound, your father knows. Had I expected this today—" She dropped the bill in my hand, staring keenly, checking the impulse to complete the sentence. To her I was a kind of loathsome, healthy bug with an independent mind to be squandered, I imagined, for her mouth seemed to twist in distaste over my very breathing.

Nettled, I spoke with pride: "It's an honest debt. My father said I was to ask for twenty."

"Are you mad?" she demanded, her hands snapping winglike to her round hips. "After all the repair work we've given your father around here? Well, you can just tell him I said it's a fine thank-you to come hounding us when we're up against it."

I sighed. Every other Saturday she was "up against it," as unfailingly as she had to be reminded of my identity, as unfailingly as I was forced to face this ignominy. My silence shouted knowledge. "I must inform Mr. Wilmot—such ingratitude! Your father's not the only contractor in town. We'll be shingling the roof soon."

Though I knew they'd give the big job to someone else, I knew also where Dad would have stopped. Then I thought of Mother and the new shoes. "He told me to try for twenty but take ten," I temporized, trying desperately not to sound rude. But I must stick.

"Take ten?" she shrieked. "Then get over to the barn. Perhaps Mr. Wilmot has some hidden under the compost." She laughed harshly.

I turned toward the barn. Though I loathed the guinea hens, they forever intrigued me, and halfway along I stopped and tried to imitate their frantic, garbled screeches. They were stupid and vicious, and though I knew I was cleverer, I was irresistibly drawn to what I scorned. Barbara, when I looked back, was watching me, her mouth working soundlessly, her eyes straining to focus, her hand listlessly trailing dust. The guinea hens tired and went back to her, fat, sleek creatures with small heads and seemingly varnished feathers. Without intelligence she stroked their all-at-once tame backs. The idyllic picture they made was in sharp contrast to the ugly reality of my mission, of the facts. I paused, wretched with admiration for the fowl and the doomed girl. That discordant chorus was a mockery to my already bleeding pride. Because Mrs. Wilmot was sentient, I went on.

Her husband was a Billiken-like man. He blinked and looked up when I darkened the doorway. "Roger's girl isn't it?" he asked, squinting nearsightedly. He, too, had difficulty in recognizing me.

"Yes," I encouraged. "Dad sent me to get some of what you owe him."

"Oh, I meant to get a check out next week," he said slowly. He glanced about as though the money might be somewhere just out of immediate vision. "Well, I'll have to see my wife about it."

"I already did," I interrupted. "She sent me to you."

"Oh," he repeated. "You see, I'm a bit short this week. When you're older, you'll understand." He peered at my impassive face. "Guess you do right now, eh?"

I choked on his kindness. "We

all need new shoes," I gulped, and hated myself for the groveling admission.

"I s'pose so." He seemed surprised at our mutual humanity. He moved over to the dusty window, withdrew an ancient wallet, and counted out five green bills.

"Ted Wilmot! That girl in the barn with you?" His wife was waving her apron at him from the back stoop. I followed him apprehensively into the clouding afternoon.

Her voice wavered, seeing me. "I thought she'd gone. Did you give her any money?"

He hawked, scantily masking his humiliation. "Not yet. I'm a bit strapped this week."

"Didn't she tell you I gave her five?" she challenged.

Mercifully, raindrops began to scatter. She scurried around to the south side after her chick before getting his answer. I backed into the barn, out of the wet, and from there watched her clucking Barbara inside. He looked too, unmindful of the rain, an expression of sad, infinite patience in his eyes, unutterable weariness in his sloped shoulders. Barbara, all that worry she was, would leave an awful void when she departed, I realized. Nothing else seemed to hold this couple together — they stayed alive for her. How fortunate we were to be seven, hand-to-mouth our existence in truth, but wholesome and happy in mind and body. All the love they had was lavished on that poor creature, who needed the world's pity not half so much as they.

He turned rueful eyes on me but made no accusation of my lie-by-default. He handed me the soiled, single bills and gave me a burlap bag to shield my head against the

rain. The odor of barnyard was heavy as I left, of compost, the horse shed, the cattle barn, and the sickly-sweet smell of the pigsty on the hill-top when the wind shifted. All this meant next to nothing to Barbara.

A total of ten dollars was in my pocket. New shoes—to enjoy with sharp senses—and Dad's future no more jeopardized than before. The Wilmots knew the most lenient contractor. I could imitate guinea hens just a little bit better than the last time out, a measure of dubious prestige among my classmates. I did not know the length of my own days, but I knew just about when Barbara Wilmot's would end. It was not morbid on such a day—I did not wish her demise, but since it was inevitable I might, without too much guilt, anticipate the time when these shameful

trips would stop. For insurance money, I knew, was to pay off creditors and such.

Triumphantly I sounded my scatter-brained guinea hen call. Mrs. Wilmot watched me from the rain-streaming window; perhaps she heard me above the downpour. I vaulted the fence, clutching the burlap bag about my shoulders. I kicked, joyfully aware of my privilege, at whatever stones of shame, unfairness, stupidity obstructed my path. I dreamed of a world without dunning, of perennial flower gardens, of boundless opportunity. Barbara was not beside her mother, seeing the world come clean again in the rain. She would be squatting by the ever-lit hearth, watching the pretty flames dance up the chimney, oblivious of all else.

Bird of Winter

● Sarge D. Sterling

There where the calm winter
Makes ice across the lakes
Lost birds look for some warm
Hand that covers from the sky,
Some flutter, slip and finally end
Frozen to the shores and struggle there
Until their breath falls like icicles
And breath shortens with the night
When Spring arrives there is a feather
Floating across the haze of blue
That in the calm of winter
Was once a singer in the air.

Magazine

● Richard E. Fitzgerald

As an old woman who rarely left the property and who still knew little English, Johanna spent her empty evening hours, while Emil toiled, reminiscing, and sometimes looking through the twenty or so magazines, old entertainment magazines, which had been accumulating many years from Emil's occasional trips to Lechville for tea or clothing, or for trade. From them, she had developed an interest in the movies, though she had never been to town when they were shown.

One night, late in autumn, a harsh rain was falling, and Emil was still out in it. Johanna sat with her thoughts, waiting. *If only Emil were home!* She worried about him loading the wagon full and driving the team to town every day this week in order to sell when there was the demand. He is too old for such rigor, her thoughts protested wearily, and she saw increasing poverty as a sign of their own physical decline; she reached to pick up a very old magazine from the top of the wood-pile. As she looked at it vacantly, she would have liked it to be news of their country, written so one could understand, telling about how the land and people had changed and about the young people who tilled where she and Emil once had.

Johanna's mind drifted back, as it often did now, to when they'd meet smiling in the hayfields as youngsters, at midday, when the sun was highest and hottest. Emil had a way of suddenly stealing kisses, sailor's

cap tilted to the back of his head, arms akimbo, catching her open-faced, unexpectedly, sometimes in the very act of speaking. She wore a kerchief knotted under her chin, a few bunches of soft, auburn hair tumbling out of it over her forehead; she was dressed usually in an uncolored, wide skirt of cotton cloth, and her head came up only to the height of his huge shoulders. She could remember leaving work secretly to be alone with him under one special patch of trees, to kiss and make private laughter, always keeping short of perfect love, which they believed must be preserved for sacramental marriage. There were the rainy nights in her father's leaky barn, the roof rattling with the heavy, distant fall, the drippings from the cracked roof scattering dust indoors and making the hay on the ground smell intense. The wedding had put tears like rain on the faces of the old women and happy smiles on the men, especially his father, and then came the exhausting dancing and hand-clapping among a few close relatives. With a heavy sigh, she remembered the fifteen acres they had tilled together, raising oats and hay to feed the stock, the surplus of which they would sell alternate years in the fall at the market place in the capital city, before the enemy had scattered their homes and blown the soil of the homeland into the river.

Hearing the clop of the horses and the wagon creaking to a stop outside the door, Johanna rose unsteadily

and began to walk hard to the door to meet her husband. She felt disappointment to see the door open in by itself ahead of her. A violent cold wind struck through the opening and frightened her. Her fear quieted when the door closed and she clung to her husband, through his wet coat. She hid the surprise it always gave her to see the harshness that the cold weather and great toil placed on Emil's features.

"Hello," he said, "I have brought you a gift." He had such a lilt in his voice when he was feeling unusually lighthearted.

"A gift for me?" She tingled.

"Forty years and I should think a man would give his spouse a gift."

From out of his long, scarred trench coat, as old as the first year of the great war, he withdrew a folded, thick red and white magazine. Immediately he saw Johanna's eyes brighten like a child's before a birthday cake.

"News of the old country?" Johanna cried, clapping her hands tightly, excitedly. He looked surprised, not angered, but an instant disappointed.

"No, mamma. The old country is not for us. This is of the new country," he said, "of America." He placed the magazine in her idle hands. "It is of the movies. See."

She opened it and quickly turned several pages, nodding approvingly.

"I am so happy. But the money?" she protested.

"I thought tonight you would like to see the American movies," he said.

She took gentle pains to reassure him. He slipped his long arms with astonishing care out of the overcoat, and immediately she stood up, holding the magazine closed, watching

him, wanting to help without knowing just where to place her hand. He looked around and bent kindly down to her.

"A fine thing," he said. "Aren't you even going to look at your gift?"

"Of course. But first you are hungry. I will cut a potato up."

"I am not hungry," he objected. "Enjoy your gift. Gifts are to bring pleasure."

"First you must eat," she said touching his shoulder affectionately and, before he could lift an arm, walked immediately to the old stove in a dark, wooden corner of the room, never letting the magazine out of her hand. The sudden warmth from the open oven soothed her body. Emil strode to her, would not hear of delay. He insisted that he could have supper later. He placed her comfortably in a chair, under the lamp, and, kneeling, as long ago, at her side, turned with blunted finger ends to a certain place in the magazine and pointed at the page.

"Look, mamma."

She smiled at him, warm eyes aglow under the docile lines and broken folds of skin, and then she peered down at the magazine open on her lap. She stared a short time, then began to run sensitive fingertips over the photograph very slowly.

"You bought the magazine because you know I like to see her."

"I know you love this American actress, mamma. I bought it for that."

She went back to looking long at the picture of an exquisite young woman, standing clothed in a lovely embroidered white dress, her hair soft and night-like, her childlike curls pleasantly encircling her head. Seeing her always took Johanna back to feeling her mother's face draw

near as she bent down to tuck her into bed.

"You know, papa, I love her, for she is like us."

"Like us? But she is young, mamma, an actress." He saw no similarity at all. But he had lost the will to outwardly contradict her. She was his, and he would do what he could to shield her from doubting herself.

"But she is like us. Look at her face." Emil studied the picture from a distance.

"Her face is beautiful," he said doubtfully.

"But, papa, her face . . . see how she suffers."

The old man leaned suddenly nearer the page. He had heard her use that word so often lately, and each time it made him shudder. Then he said, shaking his head firmly,

"She does suffer, mamma. Yes, she is one of us." Soothingly he spoke.

"But why does she suffer? Is it because, like us, she is poor?"

The old man reached down and lifted the magazine up to his eyes. His bones ached and he knew they would ache in his sleep. Johanna loved her actress and thank God she had that. It was only her longing for childhood he resented; he did not know why. He would humor her and soothe her until the ache in his bones made him cry out. But then he would be dead. He examined the magazine

without making a sound. He knew to Johanna only the pictures meant anything.

"It says, mamma, that they pay her the number five and (counting) one, two, . . . five zeros for every picture she is in."

"Is that much money?"

He thought: with Johanna it is always the money. She does not know; she cannot be hurt. And this actress is hers. So he braced himself and said softly into her ear, "It is too little for her needs."

"Ah! Yes, she *does* suffer, papa. Her face shows she suffers. That is why I love her. Perhaps if God had sent us a daughter, she would be like the American, still young, and she would look sad."

"Sometimes it is a sad life, mamma." He had saved her mood for her. Emil lowered his head and eyes and thought that kneeling beside Johanna made him almost forget his toil. Then, he reproached himself for saying that life was sad.

"It is sad for this little girl," Johanna said, and she looked down tenderly and touched the face of the woman in the magazine her husband had deposited on her lap before he got up to rekindle the fire quickly dying on the bricks.

"So young to suffer, papa. It is the money she suffers from," Johanna said fondly, softly. "As with us, papa, it is the money."



Symposium on The Role of Art in Life

Introduction

This final installment of the responses to the Editors' questions will, it is hoped, greatly enrich *Four Quarters'* accumulation of thought upon the role of art in life. Readers will recall that the current symposium on art evolved from that of the preceding volume, *The Teaching of Creative Writing*, and is thus organically linked to that series. The entire collection represents, in the belief of the Editors, an uncommonly complete searching into central questions, taking the form of short selections generously contributed by outstanding people.

The article of Philipp Fehl combines an almost evangelical tone with a highly practical orientation. The other responses vary from condensed efforts to answer the large questions, through closer scrutiny of important narrower inquiries, to readable reasons for waiting a while before taking on so large a task.

The Editors.

Practical Observations on the Development of a Taste for the Beautiful

• Philipp P. Fehl

The development of a taste for the beautiful is the ultimate goal of the layman's education in art. Little, if anything, is deliberately done in so-called art classes in the primary and secondary schools to advance it. For reasons which it is better not to discuss, the task has been overlooked, allowed to become obsolete, forgotten. Students no longer learn how to look at works of art; in fact, they are rarely given an opportunity even to see reproductions of those works of art which are the glory of civilized mankind. Students who reach college arrive there often without ever having been touched by the sight of beauty. Their most impressionable years were wasted.

A taste for the beautiful can come into being only when a young student has the opportunity to see works of art and phenomena of nature which are beautiful. But even then he can behold the beauty that is before him only if

his soul has been awakened so that he can respond to it. Much of the student's elementary preparation for this awakening must take place outside his class in art. Exercises in gymnastics, swimming, horseback riding, tennis, dancing, and fencing may engage him directly in the pursuit of elegance and gracefulness. The study of literature can lead him to the feeling observation of nature and thus acquaint him with the source of all appreciation of greatness—awe. The theater and the music hall will introduce him to the world of art directly and refine his sensitivity, especially if he be taught to act or to play an instrument and to sing.

In the conventional art class proper, the child is introduced to the materials and tools used by the artist and the craftsman. He there exercises his fingers and his imagination and, on his level, feels the excitement, the triumph, and the anguish of artistic production. His activity in class presents to him a continuous invitation, if not an obligation, to develop standards of artistic judgment. Direction will be given to this development if the class will also bring the child into well-measured contact with works of art.

Can a mere child understand works of art? Certainly not fully and certainly not in the terms used by the historians of art or the art critic. But just as certain it is that he can be moved and influenced by the proximity of beauty. In our country, works of art are kept almost exclusively in museums. It is there that the education of the amateur—the lover of art—must be principally conducted. At different age levels, the student will respond differently to a variety of works of art, but at all times the museum will be to him a place in which fine and precious things are kept. These things, however, can only exercise their noble charm if the visits to the museum are frequent; the miracle of their fineness shines ever more brilliant as the curiosity value of their novelty to the eye gives way to a delightful familiarity. Children should be encouraged to visit the galleries in the company of their parents or, if possible, alone. A light, somewhat playful work assignment can become the occasion for unforgettable wanderings through the twilight of high museum halls, the eye arrested ever anew by the presence of wonders and the heart filled with beauty.

The school must do everything it can to prepare for these museum visits and to follow them up. If there is no museum in its locality, the school should arrange occasional field trips to museums in near-by cities and prepare the students for these visits. Transportation agencies and the museums will gladly help to make such ventures feasible. Every school should have a collection of good reproductions and of plaster casts available for the use of its students. It will be found that appropriate clippings from magazines mounted on cardboard soon accumulate into a fine reference library of pictorial material. Pictures of this kind can be checked out by the pupils like any other library material and may even be used to decorate their rooms. The very act of the selection of a picture will bring the student into intimate contact with it. A slide projector is usually found in a modern school. It can also be bought or rented for very little money. Lantern slides are much less expensive than commercial reproductions on paper—they can be bought from dealers for very little money or be conveniently made at home with the help of a 35 mm. camera. Their images can be projected on a blank wall or

a white sheet; they are of a suitable size for group showing, and their presentation has for children the fascination of a special event which so well goes together with a healthy interest in art. Museums usually have a collection of slide reproductions of the works of art they own; they will be glad to lend some of them to schools. Some museums circulate collections of slides on selected subjects for a rental fee. If the school has a darkroom, the preparation of lantern slides can be made a useful class project. Besides reproductions, a school should have a collection of original works of art, be it ever so small. Works of the minor arts are often easily acquired, and parents and teachers will be proud to lend some of their family treasures to a school exhibit. The purchase of good paintings or sculptures will probably be prohibitive, but fine prints and coins can be bought even on a very modest budget. Occasionally, a museum will lend to a school one or another of its minor possessions which it has no room to display. If the school bookstore will concern itself with the sale of the smaller plaster casts which are distributed by the leading museums and of suitable picture postcards and reproductions, students will have an opportunity to begin small collections of their own.

How can the young student be made to see the works of art which have been gathered about him? Lectures are likely to miss the point; the enjoyment of fine things and of works of art depends on a more direct contact. Children should actually work with fine materials, many of which, as for example silks, are quite inexpensive in scrap form and yet preserve all their luster to the eye and their fineness to the touch. Certain semi-precious stones may even be gathered on field trips and a stick of silver, procured at a jeweler's supply store for a few dollars, will, since it is quite malleable and ductile, serve a student for a long time. It is important that all work with precious materials be carefully planned by the student and prepared for with accurate sketches and models. As often as possible, students should be given the liberty to examine closely and to hold in their hands the works of art in the school collection. A generous schoolteacher may even want to employ her own jewelry as a teaching aid. Another contact with fine things no less direct is offered by the study of calligraphy. In the imitation of the perfected forms of the Roman alphabet, the student's eye as well as his hand will find steadiness and knowledge.

Seeing is based on curiosity. "What goes on?" is, as a rule, the first question we ask in front of a picture, and "Who is it?" in front of statuary. The description of a work contains the key to its understanding, but only when the student realizes that the story of the work of art goes beyond its "news-value" and that its essence lies in the manner in which the artist has told it. From "Who is doing what?" the questions must proceed to "How is it done?" Such a question is easier asked than answered. The answer to the "How?" is very definite, but in a meaningful work of art it is also subtle enough to escape words. Comparisons with other works of art help to clarify this essential manner or style of a work of art and its component parts because comparison does away with the immediate need to define essential elements and permits one to point to them.

The child has the advantage that it also can imitate representations with-

out embarrassment. It is, above all, the practice of the imitation of suitable works of art which will bring children to see works of art and to love the beautiful. They will eagerly recreate, as if on a stage, the situation shown in a picture. The experienced teacher will see here the opportunity for a variety of entertaining and instructive games and projects: ballets can be derived from works of art, costumes can be made so that an exact replica of a picture can be rendered; charades can be played in which one group of children agrees to represent in pantomime a certain image known to the entire class—objects as well as people being represented—while the other group guesses the title of the picture. The ground plans of the painted scenes can be reconstructed in the schoolyard.

Next to this practice in interpretation should come the literal imitation of works of art. The task of preparing a replica of a given work of art makes us follow the steps of the artist and permits us to see and comprehend more than does any other exercise.

The preparation of plaster casts is easily taught and practiced in the classroom, and it—especially the comparison with the original which accompanies the final preparation of the copy—will be a good occasion for the study of sculpture. It also is a good means for the augmentation of a student's private collection. Next to plaster, papier-mâché will be found very suitable. Its comparative weightlessness is a great asset in the preparation of larger pieces. The preparation of diorama effects will be of similar benefit in the study of two-dimensional representations. They can be made very simply if one cuts the various components of a picture from a number of its colored postcard reproductions and then mounts them at appropriate distances inside a little box into which windows can be cut for viewing and for the necessary light effects. A more advanced version would employ the fabrication of models and stage sets according to scale and the use of this setup in classes in painting.

Above all, however, the now so despised practice of copying with pencil and brush is the master guide to the understanding of works of art. It is true that the copy is a terrible weapon in the hands of a teacher who is a bore, but, for that matter, in such hands "free expression" is an even more hideous terror. Inspired copying and its variations suitable for different stages of age and experience—sketches, details, enlargements, interpretations—give the student the joy and understanding which fills the musician when he plays the music of great masters, and thus help him to perfect his eye, the foremost entrance gate as much as the mirror of the soul. It is, precisely, the instruction in the art of seeing beauty which gives to exercises in drawing, painting, and sculpture their place in the education of a citizen who is to be noble as well as free.

● Samuel Hazo

My personal philosophy of art derives from my belief that an artist is both witness and maker. He is a witness to the extent that he tries to see and not merely look, to separate significant from insignificant detail, to resist the temptation to mistake the merely visible for the real, to confront the circumambience with the freshness of someone seeing it for the first time and with the tenacity and possibly the reverence of someone seeing it for the last time. He is a maker because he cannot remain mute; he must testify to what he has witnessed. This testimony must be tooled so that it dramatizes (and not merely tells) what he has witnessed with something of the freshness, tenacity, and reverence of the original experience. His ultimate criterion will be his fidelity to his own vision (an expressionist ideal) and his skill in making this vision real to someone else (a matter of communication).

The practitioner of an art should be in a better position to appreciate and criticize the work of another artist. If he is not cramped by professional jealousies or leniencies, he should be able to experience the work of another from within as well as from without. Call it empathy if you like, but a practicing artist should bring the additional dimension of the spirit of the co-worker to his contemplation of the work of another. I do not mean to suggest that an artist is *ipso facto* a good critic of other artists. He must be a good critic as well, which means that he must have mastered the critical disciplines and know how to work with them. But assuming that he has mastered them and assuming that he is a fair, honest, and sensitive man, I say he is in a position to be a good critic of another's work.

● Irving L. Zupnick

I believe that art, philosophy of art and our enjoyment of art, is thoroughly conditioned by our experience as individuals and to some extent by our participation in our particular variation of the brotherhood of man. I believe that intellect and experience are more important in this, which is a social activity (even in individual contemplation the tenuous threads link us to others), than the urgencies of the viscera, which have enough to do as it is.

I believe that the *art* in art means a fencing with the beholder that lures him into the trap of understanding or feeling, and that no art is involved in hitting someone in the face with a bare fact.

I believe that the practice of art enables you to see the problems that were solved and to appreciate the skill with which they are solved, but that it erects a film of "professional jealousy" around you that can inhibit full enjoyment of the work of others.

I believe that the United States in her love and respect for individual freedom deserves her pre-eminence in the world of art. Artists the world over are copying Americans' latest innovations in style, but it is the freedom that they need most of all.

● Anthony Lauck, C.S.C.

A personal philosophy of art embraces and colors every aspect of one's thought and activity. I shall probably never find time to write mine. It is encyclopedic in size, if not in depth.

I do not think that the practice of one of the arts is a *sine qua non* requirement, in order that rewarding contemplation be possible. However, it is a great help. I have discussed this point with art educators and they seem to agree. One in particular, a man old in the practice of teaching, believes that after comparing those who had had only courses in history or appreciation of art on the college level and those who had at least drawn or painted in a studio class, those with the studio experience had a far deeper understanding and rapport with painting. We shall best educate our young in art by exposing them to a lot of it and by making comment on the actual production. On the other hand, we shall do them no whit of good by simply talking to them about art appreciation or philosophy.

We have our share of exceptional artists in the United States today, but since their production rests upon their philosophy, and since the good ones have not had much religion or philosophy in their backgrounds in many cases, their works reflect this blindness, this chaos and confusion, this grasping for a light where there are only shadows. When the artists come along who have learned about God, and been well grounded in reason, their art will be clear again, whether objective or abstract, and there will be order to it, and organization, balance, and harmony.

● Ben Schleifer

Believing as I do that art has no limits and will never exhaust its concerns, it can follow that every philosophy of art is as good or as bad as any other. This gives me the courage to attempt mine after I have read the dazzling or creatively mystifying formulations of thousands of artists and philosophers. As a unique individual, I must never wear the clothing of others for my body; I can admire the costumes or even wear them for special occasions (I am a teacher).

Art is a re-ordering, a re-creation of flux, accident, inheritance, history, or of the time it will take these words to be written—the future. It is purposeful defeat, for it knows that its victory is temporary. It makes existence meaningful, for tomorrow there may be nonexistence. Art is the word for which there are no words, the color for the eyes that are deceived, the sound for the ears which have been trying to hear others over the insistent babble of the self.

It accepts no definitions, being unhappy with the defined. Yet it would fix a moment or remember an ancestor. But without it—the chaos of drift and the tyranny of the senses.

Art is to be human. Art is to share one's humanity and thus to create a humanity. When Yeats quarrels with himself to make poetry, I hear a voice and find my tongue.

● Walter J. Ong, S.J.

The artist today is closer to life and farther from it than he has ever been.

He is closer calculatingly or with explicit consciousness, for he is consciously and explicitly concerned with the art-life relationship. Even the abstract expressionists are so concerned. Their concern with this relationship defines their aims differently from the aims of representational artists, but it defines none the less.

The artist is farther from life because of this same explicit consciousness, for explicitness drives us to reflective distance—to a kind of remoteness.

There is little point, I think, in discussing whether the artist today is better off than earlier artists. He simply has a different situation to fit into, and he fits into it differently.

● Sister M. Genevieve, R.S.M.

Granting that all education begins in the home, it continues through the formative years of grade school, high school, college and ends only with life itself.

From this round of education, the subject of Christian art cannot be isolated. Creative ability manifests itself at a very early age, as early as the age of three or four with the child making things in the sand box. The urge to create, to make things with one's hands should be encouraged, and the freedom and ease with which the very young child draws, paints, or models things the way he sees them will be killed in the soul of the child if his work is belittled or tampered with. When the child is experiencing the making of his pictures, the teacher should stand at a great distance, not for fear of getting some of the splashing pigment from an unwieldy brush, but for fear of spoiling the child's creation.

As the child passes from grade to grade, his world of imaginations begins to fold up, he starts to realize his trees do not look like trees, nor his people like real people. At this stage, some theory or training should be introduced, and a sense of evaluation and judgment of what is good or not good in art should be developed. The child should learn what is meant by good color, line, design, and lettering by the time he reaches high school. He should be familiar with some of the outstanding masters and their works, artists of the past and of the contemporary world.

Having taught art for several years in grade school, I believe there is a great deal of honesty, simplicity, and freshness of approach in the creative work children can produce. However, it must always be judged and rated on the child's age level. Much to my surprise, something happens when the student enters high school. He becomes more aware of himself and his surroundings, more conscious of realities. As he matures, he wants his art work to look more finished, to look more like the real thing. It is at this point that an academic training should be mapped for those students who show interest in continuing their art studies.

● Wilfrid Sheed

After some pages of random notes, I have been forced to conclude that my philosophy of art is still in the making and may well never get finished at all. It is an easy kind of project to keep putting off; more seriously, I believe it better to get along without one than to use an artificial, trumped-up philosophy. This is not much help, I'm afraid.

I don't see how anyone can know what art is all about until he has had a crack at it himself. Aesthetic theories by what might be called total abstainers are automatically null and void: the artistic experience, the problems of dealing with materials and so forth cannot even be seen from the outside. What is interesting (and what demands more attention than I know how to give it) is the extent to which the practice of one art seems to help in the understanding of another. There seems to be a unity of aesthetic intention underlying all forms. But this should probably not be pressed too far: for maximum results, every art must still be learned on its own.

The state of the arts in the United States is quite beyond me—which is perhaps a form of comment on it. There seems to be serious need of good middle-brow criticism (not snobbish, not anti-snobbish) to sort out and grade approximately the mass of artistic production for the benefit of us non-specialists. Edmund Wilson used to do this kind of thing for writing in the thirties, but one opinion is not enough; and in the case of something like abstract painting, ten opinions might not be enough. At a bewildered guess, there would seem to be much competent work, little genuinely inspired and individual work, in the arts. But I can only talk with any confidence about literature, and not much about that. I should be most interested to hear what other correspondents have to say.

● Rémy Saisselin

I do not have a philosophy of art, though I have certain attitudes towards art, all of which are quite out of date I fear, attitudes hardly possible of systematic formulation. They might be rather Aristotelian upon rigorous examination; they are much more French than Anglo-Saxon, much more classical than romantic.

I suppose the arts are thriving in this country; but then, this means nothing, for what *sort* of art is thriving? An art which stands for what? I cannot help but think that it stands for a type of barbarism I do not care for. Sometimes I think that what passes for art today is something quite different from art; that we do not really have art at all, but something new, such as various ways of expressing oneself, or manifestoes of sincerity, or refusals of the past and protestations to the present, etc . . . But, then, this is a classicist's way of putting and may be all wrong. Let me put it this way: I do not think we have art—I think we have aesthetics.

● Gerhard Albersheim

In the spiritual world of the great works of art, man may still experience the bliss of the complete harmony and perfection of paradise from which he has been driven in the physical world.

Any practice of art will be helpful, as one way among others, to develop the faculty of true aesthetic enjoyment of works of art through continued and concentrated occupation with them, instead of degrading them by taking them only as a superficial entertainment.

On the one hand, the entertainment aspect of the arts is too much pushed by the far-reaching commercialism. On the other hand, a small but loud group of extremists, often irresponsible, often over-exhibitionistic, often snobbish, pushes in their experiments beyond the limits of rationality and communication. The reason may be that true art has exhausted its possibilities. It also may be that true creativity cannot flourish in an age of over-consciousness. Therefore, what is being created today in the field of the arts does not seem to answer the needs of man any more. However, we possess a great treasure of works of art which may continue to be a source of enjoyment and uplift. But we have to keep alive by safeguarding their continued understanding. This is not easy in our mass society because the aesthetic values can be assimilated only by individuals who will expend some effort in this direction. Therefore, we have to try to keep the interest in great art alive in our talented youth by convincing them, and proving to them, how deeply rewarding any effort spent in this direction will prove to be.

● Thomas P. McDonnell

It seems to me a corruption of terms to speak of a "personal philosophy of art." The solipsist could argue the case to his own advantage and you could not possibly, or logically, refute him. It is apparent, therefore, that principles obtain, in any consideration of art, which lie beyond the merely preferential. It is the work of the philosopher of art, one supposes, to discover these principles—and I am certainly willing, for the moment, to leave it at that.

As to how necessary the practice of art may be in the "rewarding contemplation of the work of others," that again has a relevance beyond its stated presumption, for it can either help or hinder, as the case may be. But I have the notion, all in all, that we are too inclined nowadays to make a "problem" of art, to approach it as we would any other pragmatic thing-to-be-solved. Yet art, in the highest sense, is *play*, is *performance*, and we too much forget the quality of art-making which relates it to creation rather than to analysis. Specifically, however, the question is easily answered, I think, in the consideration of music. How many people at a concert are graduate musicologists? On the other hand, is there anything worse than an amateur musician in the Major Bowes sense of the term?

The present state of the arts in the United States is about what it has always been—and this, of course, because of the nature of our cultural background, which is not artistic but pragmatic. Our early history demanded a good axe in the wilderness, not a poem; and all our admiration went to the wielder of the good axe—as today it goes to the wielder of the good bat. Further, though freedom is essential to the development of art, I am not so sure that the democratic social order can produce an order of art much above the level of *kitsch*, because it is in the philosophical nature of democracy to seek the common denominator. I ought, of course, to make myself perfectly clear on this point. I happen to be as socialistically inclined as may be compatible with the precepts of the teaching Church and the principles of the natural law. I welcome the decline of the American ethic from its Calvinistic origins—but in the arts I'm afraid that I tend to be, for want of a better term, aristocratic. Mass culture is *kitsch*-culture. Mass culture is not Roualt but Norman Rockwell, not Sophocles but Make-Room-for-Daddy. In other words, mass culture is the culture of commerce, and we delude ourselves to think it is anything else. I would say, then, that the state of the arts in the United States is discouragingly low—if, indeed, not at a critically dangerous point. For we have all but lost the sense of art as having any historical relevance to the Christian tradition—to the mystery of God revealing Himself in human history. Our break from Europe has merely secularized us. Our so-called greatest novelists have not the vaguest notion of the Incarnation as the central act of all human history, and a study of this effect on our literature has yet to be made; and in this regard, the deficiency of Catholic scholars is almost equally amazing.

Finally, I should like to suggest the all but required reading of a brochure that seems to me invaluable in the light of the questions you have posed for general discussion. I mean *The Catholic and Creativity*, published by *The American Benedictine Review*, Collegeville, Minnesota. Included in this brochure are two excellent essays by Thomas Merton and William Davidson, M.D. and a remarkable dialogue with Brother Antoninus. I do not think that anything better has been done on the subject in recent years.

Ash Wednesday

● Sister Mary Janet, S.C.L.

The sufficient ash
crosses my forehead
in this lean time of year.

The medieval sinner
grew full sackcloth
and sat in ashes
to be cleansed.

Yet who can know
the heart of man
that may be scoured
by the single ash
on the unbowed head.

Our Lady of the Holy Cross Monastery

Berryville, Va.

● Eugene J. Fitzgerald

Commune alive, you peripheral workmen
Sick and lost in function.
Glimpse here the confounding mosaic
And feel Jordan's lyric tranquillity
Muffling all space vain clarions.
Strange, this reverberating quietude
Sustaining with golden charm
The flavored resonance of Bernard's bell
Speaking dialogue
With Shenandoah's echoing valley.
Seek refuge, victims of Procrustes,
And mourn not the lost Spring.
But search with the sojourner's
Veiled Autumn eyes
And read with Agape's holy fools
In this quickening Braille of God.
Poise, now, your fertile creaturehood
Mutely, and become
The penitential moth, pregnant
In elegant obedience
To the canonical Light of Hours.
Poor Saturday reveler, soul barren
And alienated by smashed atoms
Come forth in new-found holy mimicry
Joining these other bent adorers
Eloquently drunken
On the mellow and Primitive Wine.

Self-Portrait at Wellfleet

● Charles Edward Eaton

Having had my assignations and true marriages, I stand
As brown as marble aged in the sea—
A jellyfish, battered to pieces, a watery iniquity,
Is like an electric soup to the ladle of my hand.

I have learned to take that as constant—
Something being born, dissolving, pricks or stings
At the moment that the mermaid sings:
I stream its stipple on my skin as though inuring
a sea-born infant.

So the music comes out of a rasping horn, or not at all.
I brought home a battered conch, still wet, one day,
Put it on the table, and heard my wife forthrightly
say,
Ah, why did you have to let it fall?

But then she recovered, and shone with combs in her hair.
Since then, from my forays, I have brought,
As evidence, a notion of the sea, half-wrought,
Or a broken shell, where Venus stood too heavily, alluding
to repair.

So to suggest a partial, sea-drawn likeness tantamount
To a few thoughts when one disrobes at night
Or wakes, radiant and foaming in the morning light,
And the two revealers, irony, ecstasy, leave less to
discount.

The Love Story of Charlie Abernathy

● John J. Keenan

Charlie Abernathy pushed through the revolving door of Horn & Hardart's and headed for his usual table in the rear. He could see that Harriet was not there yet.

"Evening, Ellie. How's everything tonight?" he mumbled to the waitress as she unleashed a cascade of silverware on the table. He unfolded his paper.

"Fine, thanks, Charlie," she said. "Is everything okay—with Harriet, I mean. Is she coming along? I was shocked when one of the girls from the store told me what happened. I'm sure she'll be okay, though."

Charlie looked into the round, serious face, trying to read the answer before he heard it.

"Ellie, will you please tell me what in God's name you're talking about? What about Harriet? Is she sick or something? Nobody told me. How am I supposed to know about these things?"

Ellie flushed. "I thought they would of called you. She's in the hospital. Keeled right over while she was waiting on a customer in Glassware. The girl told me she saw her just sag like an empty sack. But that's all I know really. I thought sure someone would of called you, naturally, because . . ." She reddened again and did not finish the sentence.

Despite his churning feelings, Charlie couldn't help finishing it in

his own mind. ". . . because Harriet didn't have anybody else and everybody knows you two are . . ." He couldn't finish that thought either. What did everybody think they were? A silly old guy whose wife had left him ten years ago and a lonely old maid seeking company at any price? An "affair"? The thought made him smile. Neither of them was the type. Yet there they were, a pair. For how long now—five or six years.

"Just give me the beef pie and some coffee, Ellie. I'll run over to the hospital and see what the story is."

He folded his newspaper in front of his plate but could not concentrate on it. Funny how he could think only of Harriet because she wasn't here; when she was, they both had no trouble devoting themselves exclusively to the evening paper. He reflected for a moment on the curiosities of habit, but that led right back to Harriet again. What could be the trouble? He went over conversations of the past few weeks for a clue, but they were no different from her conversations of a year or two years or five years ago. Usual female complaints: blues, sore feet, cramps, her varicose veins. What the hell could have made her drop over? he wondered, as Ellie put the familiar brown-crusted pie in front of him.

"Let me know how she is," she

said. "Stop in for coffee. I'm on till closing."

He left the hospital after nine and walked out to the bus stop. What he had been able to piece together out of all the young interne's medical lingo wasn't too satisfying, but one thing was clear: it wasn't good. He couldn't remember the name, but it meant she had some sort of kidney trouble. "Six weeks in bed when we let her out of here." That was the part.

How was he going to tell the doctor how complicated that was going to make things? Maybe he should have stood right up to it. "The plain fact of the matter, Doctor, is that I'm just an acquaintance of Miss Stinnett's. She really doesn't have anyone (except me, his mind insisted) and can't be cared for at home. I'd help out, but you see I have to go on a . . . I have to leave for . . . I have to get away because I . . ."

What he heard himself saying instead had been words of assurance to Harriet, words of responsibility, words that he hated as they came out of his mouth. Each word bound him to her, and he knew that his dreams of a civilized parting of the ways were being washed out in a flood of pity that he seemed powerless to control.

He got off the bus at City Avenue and walked across to H & H feeling tired and joyless. Ellie met him at the table with a cup of coffee in her hand.

"I've got a ten-minute break due," she said. "Mind if I sit? You can tell me how things are."

"Yeah, fine. I sure need to tell somebody." And he told Ellie how she looked, what she had said, and

what the doctor had said about the six weeks in bed. He did not tell her his own thoughts.

Ellie looked grim but sympathetic. "That's awful. What are you gonna do?"

He looked up with a sudden feeling of anger. What am I gonna do? Why me? I'm not married to her. I'm not even . . . I've never done anything but kiss her virgin cheek. But he said only, "Do? I'm not sure. I guess I can't let her down, though, at a time like this." And I guess she won't ever let me get away after this, he thought.

"She doesn't live too far from here," Ellie said. "Maybe if we fixed up a tray it would still be hot . . ."

"I could pick up her breakfast here before I go to work," he said, "and we could put a sandwich on the tray for lunch. She eats like a bird at lunch anyhow. Then I could bring both our suppers up so we could eat them in her room. Nothing wrong with that, is there?" They beamed at each other as though they had just solved the world's problems.

How long ago had that been? It seemed more like six years than six weeks, he reflected, as he climbed the dusty stairs toward Harriet's room. At least it was nearly over. She really was much better, and she should be able to make it to the restaurant at least. So that they could resume it again; normal living; existence; hell.

Charlie found himself automatically looking for Harriet's orange tomcat as he groped his way carefully up the stairway. A couple of times he had almost dropped the tray when Old Tom dashed across his feet. He found himself disliking the cat, per-

haps because it was Harriet's only other possession.

He knocked on her door with his left hand, balancing the tray in his right.

"It's me, Harriet. Open up. This stuff's heavy."

He tried the knob, then knocked again. Then he saw the saucer and, lurking in the shadowy hall, the old cat. The saucer was dry; a faint accumulation of dust and Old Tom's pacing suggested it hadn't been filled that day. Charlie's flesh began to prick. People were always being found dead in locked rooms. What if Harriet . . . ? He started down the stairs for the landlady's apartment. In his mind's eye he caught a fleeting glimpse of himself in mourning, nodding gravely at callers. Old Tom followed at a respectful distance, perhaps because he didn't know what else to do.

As he rang Mrs. Thomson's buzzer, Charlie tried to quiet his feelings. Maybe she had just taken a sleeping pill. Why do people always jump to the worst conclusion?

"Yes, what do you want? Oh—Mr. Abernathy. I thought you'd be around," the landlady said with a knowing look. "Wondering where Miss Stinnett is, I'm sure."

The woman's cat-and-mouse approach irritated him, but he determined not to show how concerned he was.

"Well, yes, I did bring her over a bite to eat, but it's nice to know she was feeling good enough to go out today. She told me she might go to the hairdresser today (he lied). Tell her I stopped around, will you?" He shifted the tray to his other arm as casually as he could manage it. He was trying not to feel foolish and mentally damning Harriet for not

calling him.

The landlady still stood in her doorway. Was she laughing at him or pitying him? Her expression made him stop.

"Did she leave some kind of message for me, Mrs. Thomson? Am I supposed to meet her anywhere?"

She had forced him to show his concern and confusion.

"Gone further than the hairdresser's," the woman said, paying elaborate attention to a rip in her dress under the right arm. "Left completely."

He held on to the tray as he tried to make some sense out of the two words. He heard words come from his lips without his willing them.

"What do you mean, left completely? She's a sick woman." His mind contradicted: Harriet was definitely better. He launched out again. "She's got a job to go back to, same job for twenty years. She wouldn't just walk out on . . ." She couldn't just walk out on me because she needed me, his mind finished up.

The landlady looked satisfied with the reaction. "Said you'd probably be upset," she nodded. "Told me to tell you how she appreciated everything you'd done, but now that she was well she wanted to just get away on her own and she was sorry."

The woman leaned forward confidentially. "Sometimes it just ain't there anymore, you know? No use crying over spilt milk. Sorry I had to be the one to break the bad news, but she wouldn't wait. Said I should tell ya." She closed the door without noticeable regret.

He stood there for a moment foolishly, like a waiter with an order nobody wanted. The cat came over and rubbed against his trouser leg, miaowing just loud enough to show

interest in the contents of the tray. He looked down at the fat orange cat with a certain affection, a sense of new-found comradeship.

"We've been jilted, old tiger . . . dumped," he said, and then he put down the tray and took the metal cover off the food. "Go to it, cat, it's the least I can do when we've been dumped together. Never thought you'd be dumped, did you?"

Dumped. The description seemed right to him. It was his feelings that didn't. He couldn't sort them out. He had sometimes daydreamed what it would be like not to have to think anymore of Harriet, even prayed for it. Why then did he feel no relief, no sense of freedom, no elation. Just because his pride was hurt? He'd even prepared for that, so long as the end result was the same. It was not hurt he felt. It was nothing. Emptiness. Vacuum.

He hadn't expected this. Suddenly the whole world was quieter. He could hear his own watch ticking and the sound of a lone cricket in the basement under his feet. He remembered his mother's superstition about Death in the house in which a cricket sang.

Shaking himself free of such thoughts with an effort, he reached for the tray. "A man with a broken heart shouldn't have such a good appetite," he said sardonically to the cat. "Go find yourself some nice tabby to listen to your tale of woe."

When he got back to Horn's the window lights were out and the waitresses were counting their tips. He found Ellie seated at his table (not Harriet's and his, any more).

"How's she coming along tonight?" Ellie asked as he slumped into the chair rubbing his tired arms.

"I guess you'd have to say she's

cured." He smiled at his double meaning. "Yeah, I won't have to be carrying any more dinners up there."

Ellie smiled. "Be nice to have you both at this table like always."

He shook his head. "No, I've got to explain, Ellie. I couldn't tell everybody this, but I know I can explain it to you. What I'm trying to say is that it's all over. We won't be coming in here together; we won't even see each other. That's it." Ellie's eyes reflected her disbelief. "After all these years, you've had a fight? Oh, I'm sorry, Charlie."

"No fight. I guess when you're not a kid anymore, you don't end up with anything so definite as a fight. When you fight, you can always make up. Hell, Ellie, here's the way it is. I couldn't let her down when she was sick, could I. She needed me. Well, now she's okay again. There's no use trying to keep pretending you feel something you don't, now is there? It's for the best. I'm a loner anyway. I like my freedom."

Ellie dabbed at her eyes with a napkin. "Men can take these things better than women, I guess. Poor Harriet. I know how it feels to be lonely, to face walking home alone to an empty room and all. It's awful to be lonely." She seemed to be crying as much for herself as for Harriet.

The manager went around switching off lights until the restaurant was almost dark. Only the cold neon tube at the rear was left for a night light.

He felt the chill of the light and of Ellie's last word at the same time. Instinctively, he reached across and patted the water-reddened hands. "I never thought of you being lonely, Ellie," he said. "You don't have to be lonely. No one wants to be alone."

A Little Gentleman

● Robert A. Wiggins

Andrew stepped up on the footstool in front of the dresser so that he could see more of himself reflected in the mirror. The added height made him feel older and somehow more self-assured; he would soon be nine years old. Like most children he welcomed the year added to his age, but he also regretted it a little because he was rather proud of being taken for older in spite of his smallness. His mother proudly remarked to her friends that Andrew was advanced for his age. He did impress adults as being precociously mature compared with most children; how he impressed other children, he had little opportunity for discovering, since he was an only child and rarely saw other children save under the watchful eye of an adult.

He regarded himself solemnly in the mirror while he brushed his hair and saw the reflection of a thin boy with eyes too large for his small face. He was ashamed of his unusually long lashes, though his mother said they made his face more interesting. He never laughed and only rarely permitted himself a discreet smile on cue from his mother, who said that a little gentleman was never boisterous. His gravity of expression seemed to reflect the weight of his responsibility as the man of the house.

His father had been gone for three years, and Andrew knew nothing more of him. He had gone the same day that Andrew started to school, at Miss Smith's. He remembered his father had called him Andy and

wanted him to go to public school, but his mother always corrected anyone else who called him Andy and carefully explained that he had been christened Andrew. His mother never spoke of his father since that day when she told him Father was gone and would not return, and now he must be the man of the house. He was all she had left, and he must learn to be a little gentleman. Mother wanted always to be proud of her little gentleman.

Andrew turned from his dresser. It was almost time for Mrs. Western and Genevieve to call for tea. His mother would expect him to wait for their guests with her in the drawing room. Andrew looked about his room and found everything in order. There were no clothes for the maid to pick up after him. Mother said a gentleman did not abuse the services of good servants. Satisfied with himself, he left to join his mother.

After quietly entering the drawing room, he closed the door and crossed over toward his mother, seated on a couch before a low table. She sat erect always, as though before an audience of her loyal subjects. Indeed she was a commanding woman; one expected that when she rose, she would tower over her neighbors, and it came as something of a shock to observe that she was really below medium height. Her features taken singly were quite regular — each might have adorned a woman of some beauty — but together they composed a face quite plain and un-

remarkable except for a flawless skin. Her hair was first braided and then arranged on her head like a diadem.

She watched her son as he approached, surveying the evidences of his toilet critically, and nodded approval; then she motioned him to sit across from her before she spoke.

"Mrs. Western is bringing her daughter, Genevieve, this afternoon. Don't forget to act like a gentleman, though I know Genevieve is sometimes a bit trying, and it is difficult. I rather think her parents indulge her too much."

"Yes, Mother."

"Do try, Andrew. Perhaps then we might be able to get—what was it?—a football for you. Mind you, I don't approve. But perhaps there is no harm in your kicking a soccer ball around the grass. You do need the exercise, but I should think tennis more suitable. What do you think, Andrew?"

"Whatever you think best, Mother." The boy did not choose to explain the difference between football and soccer. He was not sure he could, and he would only displease his mother by seeming to question her decision.

"I should not wonder if your father's old tennis racket is still about."

Andrew caught his breath and then tried to exhale without making a sound. It was the first word spoken of his father for three years. He dared not look in her direction for fear of revealing his interest. He waited for her to continue, expecting some further reference to his father and the fact that he had been fond of the game. Andrew was prepared to like tennis, though he had never considered the sport before.

"I still have mine, I know. We shall be able to play together. I haven't played in years, but it will be fun to teach you the game. A gentleman really should engage in some sport like golf or tennis." His mother apparently was not conscious of the reference to his father.

Andrew did not visibly show his disappointment. "Yes, I think I would like that. Do you suppose the old racket is still around?"

"I'll send Anna to look for it, dear." She rang for the maid and instructed her where to look.

Andrew experienced a moment of fear when Anna left; perhaps she would not find the racket. He needed it desperately, and it would be a bitter disappointment not to have it now that he knew of its existence. He must not show his concern to his mother. It was in her power to deny him the racket if it was found, and there was no other possession of his father's left in the house that he knew of. He started in panic as the doorbell rang.

"Shall I go, Mother?" He did not want Anna to have to stop her search.

"No, dear, I'll ring for Anna."

The maid ushered Mrs. Western and Genevieve into the room. The woman was large and florid. She extended her hand and effusively greeted Andrew's mother as though the week since they had seen one another had been a year. When they were seated, they settled back as an audience to watch the boy and girl perform. Andrew knew what was expected and walked up to Genevieve.

"Won't you let me take your coat?" he asked and carried the garment out to the hall. Upon returning, he led her to the couch opposite the two mothers. Genevieve

docilely obeyed.

"Please sit here with me," he invited.

He looked toward his mother's smile of approval and knew he could relax his attention for a while. He wondered if there were some pretext that would permit him to slip away for a moment to remind Anna that she still had not found the tennis racket. But the maid had other duties now to perform. She brought in the tea, and Andrew was also expected to help his mother serve.

There were milk and cakes for him and Genevieve, and, just as his mother ministered to Mrs. Western, he was expected to play host to Genevieve. It was not difficult, since the food obviously interested the girl most. Andrew watched disapprovingly as she noisily chewed the cakes and gulped her milk.

"Genevieve!" her mother admonished, "one's mouth is closed when one chews food." She turned to Andrew's mother. "I don't know how you do it. Andrew is such a little gentleman."

His mother responded to the compliment. "It is difficult in these days when children seem to run wild. But Miss Smith is such a help with Andrew."

Andrew also enjoyed the approval of his conduct. Really, Genevieve was quite disgusting the way she smacked her lips over the sweets. The cakes were delicious, but a gentleman exercised restraint, his mother had said. Obviously Genevieve was not a promising pupil as a little lady.

The mothers lowered their voices, excluding the children from conversation. Andrew tried not to show interest in what they were saying. He really did not care, but it would

seem rude if he appeared to be listening. A gentleman did not eavesdrop. Nor did he particularly resent the role as the model child who is to be seen and not heard. He must be careful not to become too absorbed in his own thoughts and forget Genevieve. When she finished eating, she would become restless, and it was expected of him to keep her amused as a good host should.

Andrew kept plying Genevieve with cakes. It was easier than talking to her, but he must also keep the corner of his eye toward the mothers for a possible signal that she was to have no more. The cakes were becoming dangerously low on the platter when Anna came into the room.

She announced, "I found the racket, Ma'am," and placed it on a side table.

"Thank you, Anna." The words were polite, but Andrew knew they concealed irritation at the interruption.

He stared fixedly at the racket on the table. Yes, it was quite real. It looked almost new, as though it had never been used, but that did not matter; it was his father's. He longed to go over and take it up in his hands and fondle the smooth handle and feel the tight strings. It would be a strong, tough weapon, he knew, that a man could strike hard with and feel no soft yielding of the strings. But he dared not betray any unusual interest; his mother was jealous of anything he seemed enthusiastic about. She would point out that such conduct was rude and ungentlemanly toward their guests.

Genevieve stirred at his side. She too was looking at the racket, and no inhibition stifled her impulse to act. Before Andrew's fearful gaze she wriggled off the couch and ran over

to the table, and as he watched speechless, she picked up the racket and swung it experimentally a few times through the air. She came back to the group about the table, still carrying the racket. Andrew's eyes were riveted to her grip upon the handle.

Genevieve pointedly observed, "I always wanted a tennis racket."

Embarrassed, Mrs. Western scolded. "Genevieve, you really must not—"

"Of course, she may have it. It is an old one and really has no value." Andrew's mother regally bestowed largess upon the child.

"No!" Andrew gasped and sprang to his feet. "You gave it to me!"

"Andrew! I am surprised at your behavior. Of course, I promised you a racket, and you shall have a new one. Now apologize like a gentleman to Genevieve and tell her she may have the racket."

"Yes, Mother." Andrew swallowed the ache in his throat. The apology came readily, but he stumbled over the presentation, and his eyes clung hungrily to the racket in Genevieve's lap. He avoided looking up at the girl for fear she would read from his eyes the hate and rage he felt toward her. Finally, he could contain his misery no longer and turned to his mother.

"Please, may I be excused for a moment? I don't feel well. I would like a glass of water." He turned and fled toward his room. His mother understood; Genevieve had behaved rather badly, but Andrew realized he should not have conducted himself rudely in return. He needed a few moments alone to compose himself.

Alone in his room Andrew felt his throat clogged. It was difficult for him to breathe, and he made curious

noises down in his chest. He wanted to cry, but his mother said a gentleman did not cry. He felt that if he did not cry he would stifle. He first removed his shoes and then threw himself on the bed and buried his face in the pillow and let the sobs come shaking his body.

It was good to cry, he discovered, because he did not have to control the act. The tears came without effort, and the choking sobs released the pain bound tight in his chest. Then the salt tears began burning his eyes, and he wanted to do more than cry. He kicked his feet hard against the air and buried his face deeper into the pillow so that his screams of rage could not be heard.

Gradually he calmed and felt better, lighter and giddy; there was no more tight ache in his throat. Instead, there seemed a great emptiness in his breast that no amount of crying would ever drive away. He slowly got up from the bed and fumbled for his shoes. He could not be gone long, for his mother would expect him to be present when their guests took their leave. He washed his face and hoped the redness of his eyes would go unobserved.

He thought as he made his toilet that if he had not acted like a little gentleman he might still have owned the racket. He could pretend the new one was his father's, but it would not be the same as owning the real one. That was the trouble with being a gentleman: one had always to be satisfied with substitutes, while barbarians like Genevieve could always get what they wanted. Andrew did not trust this new bit of knowledge. There was something wrong with the justice of it, and he knew his mother would disapprove of the sentiment.

Andrew re-entered the drawing

room and carefully closed the door behind him. Mrs. Western and Genevieve were preparing to leave. Andrew brought the girl's coat and held it for her, but held it awkwardly so that Genevieve was detained while the mothers moved out of hearing range into the foyer. Andrew gritted his teeth hard together so that his words would not come out distinctly to the girl and muttered into her ear

as he settled her coat about her neck,
"You bitch! You bloody little bitch!"

Andrew escorted her to the door. Genevieve looked puzzled. "What did you say?"

"Do come again. Perhaps we might learn to play tennis together," Andrew said, while his mother and Mrs. Western looked on. Andrew bowed slightly and held the door, just as a little gentleman should.

The Trackwalker

● George Herman

The trackwalker accommodates his tread
To sleepers lying in a stony bed,
Parallel except for curves, separated
By subtle difference of distance, mated
By steel rails spiked at ankles and at necks.
(Fishplates connect the rails, preventing wrecks.)

The trackwalker must regulate his stride
By ties that hold the rails on which men ride;
He must drive home the spikes when they work loose;
See that upon this bed a bounden truce
Is kept, that all connections are maintained,
And distances observed, however strained.

The trackwalker could never guard the road
If he could hear the rails beneath their load;
If he could see the splitting when the frosts
Strike at the sleepers; if he reckoned costs.
Like a sleepwalker, he moves within the tracks
With a sureness that the conscious walker lacks.

Tante Berenice

● Victor Chapin

When Roger Henderson, a Columbia Ph.D. candidate in French literature, was introduced by a friend into the salon of Lily Lavelle, it was, he considered, a fortunate occurrence. He was spending a year in Paris on the GI Bill, taking courses at the Sorbonne and gathering material for his dissertation, a projected history of surrealism and its effect on intellectual life during the years before the second world war; so he was delighted to make the acquaintance of Lily Lavelle, who had been something of a personage in surrealist times, though now few could easily recall what she had written or who exactly had been her famous lovers.

As soon as he had met her, Roger displayed such eager interest in ideas and personalities now generally forgotten but which had been the important ones of Lily Lavelle's life that she was soon persuaded to take an unusual interest in him. His young face with the intent expression affected her deeply, and when she heard him discuss things that had been so familiar to her for so long, they seemed newly significant. She began to see great possibilities in this young man, not only as a biographer of herself, but also as a disciple of the ideas for which she lived. In fact, she became convinced, for a time, that Roger Henderson was the one, long hoped for, who would somehow justify her life. This notion moved her so much that she felt it necessary to have the young

man with her as often as possible. She announced an excited interest in Roger's dissertation and promised to do everything she could to further his knowledge of surrealism.

Lily Lavelle was no longer young, her hair was dyed and her once celebrated chic had now an historical quality; but Roger did not notice. All he wanted was to hear what she could tell him about Eluard, Apollinaire, Breton, and the other surrealist heroes who had been her comrades in the great literary battles of the twenties and thirties and to look through all the letters, diaries, and pamphlets in her possession that would yield the facts and insights he needed for his thesis. Before long, he was going almost every afternoon to Lily's flat in the Rue Jacob. Though he never tired of questioning her and she seemed always ready to answer, he did not feel he was getting the kind of detailed information he had hoped for. It was, he felt, only a matter of finding the right line of questioning.

Lily, however, was beginning to be discouraged. Their conversations had remained peculiarly abstract, and Roger appeared to have developed no interest in her that was not strictly literary. It was not long before the solemn fascination he found in surrealism seemed to her inspired by a merely clinical curiosity, and, realizing she had over-estimated the interest she would find in him, she began to be bored. The afternoon research periods that had been so

promising at first now exasperated her. She felt angry and resentful every time he appeared with notebook and pencil and a new topic for discussion. She bore it for a few days; but when he did not even notice her change of attitude or pay any attention to her hints of dissatisfaction, she could stand it no longer. She decided to break him down somehow, and one day attacked him where he would be, she knew, most vulnerable.

"Are you sure you have chosen the right subject for your studies?" she asked. "Wouldn't you do better to write about Descartes or Sainte-Beuve? I don't believe that surrealism is right for you at all."

Roger was startled. He displayed, for the first time since Lily had met him, a change of expression.

"But it's my *field*," he said passionately. "Of course, it's right for me. I'm sure I know more about surrealism than any other American of my generation."

Stung by this inadvertent reminder of her age, Lily decided to goad him in this way all she could.

"You are not a surrealist," she said, laughing, "you couldn't be . . . never . . . never. You have absolutely no feeling for it. You may have the facts, but you don't comprehend the first essential, the only thing in surrealism that matters. I'm sure you could not recognize a poetic act if one were to be performed right under your nose."

Roger got up from the sofa where he had been sitting beside her and began to pace.

"What do you mean by a poetic act?" he asked coldly.

"*Voilà!*" Lily cried. "You see, you would not ask if you could understand."

"Before we speak of understanding, don't you think we should define our terms?" Roger blushed furiously when Lily guffawed loudly at this. "Why am I so amusing?" he demanded.

"O you dear little American fool," Lily replied cheerfully, "you are so young, so innocent. You know nothing . . . nothing. And you think you are so profound. No matter where you are, what you are doing, you are always the same, you Americans . . . the hope of the world and its despair!"

"Thank you," Roger said coldly, with dignity. "If I have been wasting your time, I'm sorry. I thought you were interested."

Laughing again, but with genuine sympathy, Lily changed her tactics.

"I've hurt your pride," she said. "I've treated you like a child. You mustn't mind. That's the way I like you to be, really. I've been very mean to you, but I've things on my mind, as you say, and you must forgive me."

"Very well," Roger agreed. "Now will you tell me what you mean by a poetic act?"

"Can't you imagine?" Lily asked.

"Certainly. But I would like your definition. It might be just the kind of statement I've been wanting."

Before answering, Lily went to the window and, pulling back the curtains, peered down into the busy street. When she did speak again, her voice had lost its mocking edge and was now serious and intense.

"Here is what I think," she said. "This is how I know it to be. Everyone sometimes has to make a choice. The time comes when you must choose one way or the other . . . the poetic way or the way of the world—that is, the poetic way or the way of

the sane, the cautious, the practical, the reasonable . . . the sensible way, you would call it. If you choose that, then, very well, you are a sane, practical person. You are part of the world. But soon you will be unable to comprehend the poetic meaning of life . . . and if you choose the poetic way, you must be ready to do without comfort, success, and even the love of your family. The true poet has no trouble deciding, but there are all the others in between who must suffer much before they know what they must do."

Roger made no comment when Lily had finished. This made her nervous, and she demanded, "What do you say? Do you understand now?"

"And that is how it was with you?" Roger asked, and she replied, "Perhaps."

"Why don't you tell me?" he asked softly.

She thought he was being tender. "You really want my story?" Her voice was eager.

"Yes. Yes," Roger insisted. "If I can trace your history from the very beginning, I will have a true surrealist history . . . for if surrealism isn't you, what is it?"

The old enthusiasm and excitement came alive again. Lily was encouraged. The boy, for a moment, had shown himself warm and human, or so she reasoned now. She decided to reveal herself more fully. There was no reason why she shouldn't; the only thing that had prevented her doing so earlier was the fear that what she had to tell would be wasted on him.

"You want to know my life?" she asked, assuming a sad expression. "Very well. You are a child, but—who knows? Perhaps it is the child who understands. I will tell you. I

came from the worst possible beginning! My milieu was the bourgeoisie. You cannot imagine how terrible that is. They are stupid and narrow and completely without imagination. Often they are cruel when they pretend to be most kind. But I will show you!" Her face became animated and she jumped up and ran over to Roger. "I have a splendid idea. Tomorrow is the wedding of my nephew. It will be a great event in Courville. The whole family will be assembled. You must come with me."

"It would be most interesting," Roger said, hesitating. "But would that be right? Wouldn't I be out of place?"

"Perhaps," replied Lily, annoyance again evident in her voice. "But what does that matter? You will observe . . . and you will protect me from them. Yes, I need you for that. I would not go if I did not have a friend with me . . . because, after so many years, they despise me for not being like them, and they would still like to punish me for it."

"But you have never broken with them completely?"

Lily, fearing he would be disappointed in her story, hastened to explain in more dramatic terms. "Oh, yes. For years we did not meet. But I always saw Tante Berenice—in secret—and eventually, when I began to be a little known and more independent, she persuaded me to see the rest of them again."

"Tante Berenice?" Roger echoed. "Your aunt?"

"Not really. She was my mother's friend when they were girls. After my mother married and had her children, Tante Berenice was our governess. You see, Tante Berenice was very poor—her family had somehow lost everything—so she would

never marry. Ah, I loved Tante Berenice. Now she is very old and does not always know who I am. They are all very old now."

"They live there in Courville, all together?"

"Yes, they are still there—all of them. Tante Berenice lives now in the little gatehouse. There are no more children for her to look after. Tomorrow when my nephew marries, the last of her charges will be gone. They are very old now . . . Tante Berenice, my mother, my father. My mother is deaf—she hears nothing at all. She has been so for years. But my father does not seem old. He is the same as always, and he has not yet forgiven me. Not really. He never will." Lily was speaking now in a low, unimpassioned voice and, as she told her story, stood perfectly still in the middle of the room. "You see," she continued, "Father wanted me to marry the son of his partner. He was determined. It seemed to him so right, so perfect. And I liked the boy quite well. I was agreeable—for a while, at least. But then I found I could not endure the way my father loved him. He fawned on him and treated him more like a son than he did my poor little brother who seemed not to matter to him at all. It is strange, but I became very jealous and could no longer bear the boy. The thought of marrying him became horrible to me. I did not know what to do. I was desperate. The day was drawing closer and all the preparations were made. My father was so happy—he was like the bridegroom. At last I could stand it no longer and went to my mother and told her how I felt, and she only shook her head sadly and said it was natural, that I would get over it, that she had felt the same

way. Then I tried to overcome my feeling, but could not. So, two days before the day, I tried to tell my father. His rage was fantastic. He could not believe that I would question the happiness he had arranged for me. It had to be the way he wanted it to be. So at last I went to Tante Berenice, just the day before, and she understood. She told me I did not have to marry the boy. She gave me the courage I needed, and I ran away. I took the money Tante Berenice had saved and went to Paris. I began my career as a governess, just as Tante Berenice had done, but I was clever and found other opportunities, and, of course, I began to be a surrealist. It was ten years before I went to Courville again or saw any of my family except Tante Berenice."

When she had finished, Lily lighted a cigarette and peered through its smoke away into the distance.

Roger, awed, said, half whispering, "And that is how you chose the poetic way."

"Yes," Lily replied. "After that day I never looked back, and I never regretted my choice. I have always loved Tante Berenice because if it had not been for her, I would have lived differently. I would never have known the poetic way. I would have been a slave to the bourgeois, as she had been, as they all have been. But come with me tomorrow and you will see for yourself. It will be a remarkable occasion, for at last my father is to have his will. The son of my brother is to marry the daughter of my old fiancé. He is dead, and his father, my father's partner, is dead too, but there is this daughter, the only one left of them, and she is to marry a Lavelle. At

last the families will be one. The factories, the horses, the autos — everything will be united when the children are united. My poor father will be happy and maybe he will forgive me at last."

"Is that what you want?" Roger asked quietly.

"No! No!" Lily's voice was suddenly fierce. "I do not want him to forgive me. I should hate it. I was right and he was wrong. Why should I be forgiven?"

"Maybe you should not go to this wedding."

Lily looked at him and, seeing his solemn expression, laughed. "Do you think I would miss it?" she asked. "It will be like going to my own wedding thirty years late."

There was something in these revelations that embarrassed Roger; he was a stranger to the kind of emotion Lily had revealed to him. Even while his cheeks were still warm from blushing, he set about trying to analyze her motives and reactions. Her irony was fine, he thought, very proper for a veteran surrealist, but there was a hint of hysteria in it, and this he did not like. It was, he told himself, time to go. He got up from the sofa and busied himself gathering up his books and papers.

"You are going?" Lily asked.

"I really must. I've taken up too much of your time."

"Really! You are incredible!" she said, but after one despairing shrug of her shoulders, gave him her hand. "You will call for me tomorrow at eight in the morning," she said, her voice again crisp. "We will take a train from the Gare Montparnasse."

"You really want me to go?" Roger mumbled.

"If you do not, I shall never see you again."

Fearing Lily meant what she said and that he would be thwarted in his research if he did not do what she asked, Roger did appear in the Rue Jacob the following morning. Lily was ready. She was more elaborately dressed than was her habit—because of the wedding—and he was glad he had been prudent enough to wear his gray flannel suit even though the weather was really too warm for it.

They took a taxi to the Gare Montparnasse, arriving in time to catch the train for Courville. It was not much more than an hour's ride. Roger enjoyed himself on the way far more than he had expected he would, because Lily was in heightened spirits, ready to discuss anything, and she launched into a succession of revealing anecdotes about the great days of the twenties, exactly the kind he had been wanting from her and which she had not, until now, been willing to give him. She kept on all the way to Courville, and he was so delighted with her that he quite forgot his serious student's manner and, overcome with glee, bounced up and down on the train seat.

What happened on the station platform at Courville put an end to this gaiety, however. There Lily was met by her father and a cousin, both of whom were manifestly surprised and displeased when Roger was presented to them. The father, an erect, white-haired man who did not look like the bourgeois parvenu Lily had led Roger to expect, but more like an aristocrat of the *ancien régime*, merely nodded, turning his eyes away from Roger in a way that expressed immoderate distaste. The cousin also nodded; but he stared curiously, examining every detail of Roger's

dress and person until Lily noticed and, smiling happily, waved Roger into the vintage Renault that was waiting for them beside the station platform. He found himself sitting in the front seat beside the cousin, while Lily sat behind with her father.

"They don't know English," she called out as the car started to move. "We can say what we like about them."

"They're not glad to see me," Roger replied gloomily, sensing that the cousin was driving with only one eye on the road, with the other fixed firmly on him.

Shouting above the noise of the motor, Lily said, "They think you are my lover."

Roger turned and saw that she had her arm around her father's shoulders.

"But that's horrible," he said. "You must tell them."

"It wouldn't do any good. They are too convinced of my wickedness. This is just what they would expect of me, corrupting youth and flaunting myself before them."

Roger's cheeks burned scarlet; his mouth fell open, and his face froze in an expression of stupefied amazement.

"Do you mind so much, being my lover for just one day?" Lily demanded.

But Roger was too upset to answer at once, and just then they arrived at the *Mairie* of Courville, where the legal ceremony was to be performed. They all climbed out of the Renault and stood waiting for the wedding procession now forming, as the other relatives and guests alighted from their cars. The bride and groom, young, smiling, attractive, did not look at all as if they minded that their marriage had been arranged

for them. Lily and her father went forward to greet them and go with them into the town hall. Roger hung back with the cousin, moving along slowly with a small group of distant relatives and casual observers to the very back of the room. The mayor made short work of the formalities that preceded his speech, but when it came, Roger thought it interminable. He could understand little or none of it because the mayor's enunciation was impeded by false teeth that slipped. However, the mayor did finish finally, and the entire company climbed back into their cars and rode to a church in another part of town where a priest was waiting to celebrate Mass. This also took a long time and was of little interest to Roger. Before it was over, he was both hungry and cross.

The rites completed, the wedding party went on foot, marching through a part of the town under a shower of flowers and confetti. The bride's veil unfurled in the breeze and floated behind her close to the tall black feather on Lily's hat, conspicuously chic in this provincial crowd. It was a day with warm sun, unusual for autumn, and some of the ladies in the procession held parasols over their heads, old beribboned parasols that were never used, probably, except on occasions such as this. Roger was able to identify Lily's mother, for she had taken her place beside Lily and her father just behind the bridal couple; she had, he noticed, the blank expression that is characteristic of deaf people and she did not smile or look about her as the others did. But which of the other ladies in the group was Tante Berenice, he could not tell.

Actually, it was a short walk from the church, which was on the edge

of the town of Courville, to the Chateau Lavelle, which stood behind a high wall at the far end of a short avenue of poplars. It was a large house in the simple provincial style. Roger liked it very much while they were walking toward it, but once inside, he hated it. The furnishings were overwhelmingly hideous, a *mélange* of pieces in the high Victorian and art *nouveau* styles. His eye was offended by a rush of stained glass, beaded lamp shades, antimacassars, wrought iron, and artificial flowers.

The wedding breakfast was held in the formal dining room, the most oppressive of all the rooms, and it was an agony for Roger. The guests had begun to conjecture about what he was doing in their midst and, drawing the obvious conclusions, glanced at him covertly. Lily saw to it that he was seated next to her but paid no more attention to his comfort and peace of mind than to smile at him elaborately, for the benefit of the others, ever so often. Because of his nervousness, he ate and drank more than was good for him and ended by feeling ill and depressed.

Sometime toward the end of the toasts and speech making, when Roger was feeling his worst, Lily looked at him carefully and, seeing his misery, spoke in a low voice.

"You are suffering," she said. "You do not thank me for bringing you here."

"You planned it all," Roger whispered back indignantly. "You only brought me here to shock them."

"Do you mind so much?"

"You must think me an awful fool."

"Of course. You are an awful fool." Lily pronounced this judg-

ment gaily, patting Roger's hand. He was ashamed of his burning cheeks and made an effort to regain his composure. "Where is Tante Berenice?" he asked, surveying the room.

"She did not come. She is too old, poor thing, and she does not understand what is happening."

It was then, just as they were speaking of Tante Berenice, that the subdued gaiety of the gathering was shattered by a series of loud, sharp noises that could have been nothing but gun shots. There was a breathless moment of suspense, then panic: shouts, screams, curses as everyone tried to run out of the room at once.

Lily grasped Roger's arm.

"Take me back to Paris quickly," she said, frightened. "I don't want to see what it is." But her voice was cut off by all the others shouting from outside: "Tante Berenice!" and then she ran forward, repeating loudly, in an anguished voice, their cry, "Tante Berenice!"

In the entrance hall, at the bottom of the stairs, Tante Berenice lay on the marble floor. A gun, still smoking, lay near her. People crowded round her, forming a circle, or huddled in corners, whispering and staring. Roger remained on the staircase, halfway down on the landing. He stared down at Tante Berenice's motionless form, searching for blood, he told himself; but he soon saw that there was no blood to find. Tante Berenice had not shot herself; she had only fainted after firing the gun.

No one could discover who or what Tante Berenice had meant to shoot, or what, if anything, she had actually hit. When she began to regain consciousness and was helped to a sitting position, they all de-

manded to know. Tante Berenice, however, paid no attention. When she was on her feet and quite steady, she refused all further attention, waving away questions with a finality that was incontestable. She was old and frail, a withered Dresden shepherdess, but as she swept past the relatives and guests, motioning them away with large authoritative gestures, she was majestic.

At the door she paused for a moment, then turned to speak to the wedding party. Her voice was strong and clear. "I have killed him," Roger understood her to say. "It is all over at last." And she walked slowly out of the house and down the avenue of poplars to her cottage. No one dared follow her.

When she had gone, Roger was able to enlighten the relatives and guests, for he had just noticed that the portrait of a young man in military dress that hung above his head on the stair landing was riddled with bullet holes.

That evening, in the train going back to Paris, Lily and Roger sat in silence until they were but a short distance from the Gare Montparnasse. Then, suddenly, Lily snapped out of her reverie and spoke in a harsh, determined voice. "I will not let them send her to an asylum. I will have her to live with me. If there is no one left to love her but me, then I will love her enough for all of them."

Roger said sympathetically, "I think they are wrong to say she is dangerous."

"Just because she fired at my father's portrait does not mean she would have shot him."

"No, of course not," Roger was reflecting, thinking out loud really. "If she had shot anyone—if—it

would more likely have been your nephew."

"Yes," Lily agreed. "Poor Tante Berenice. She thought it was my wedding. She thought they were going to force me to marry that boy."

"But that does not explain why she shot the portrait."

Lily shrugged impatiently. "She was confused. The portrait made a shadow on the stairs and she shot at it. It was something like that."

"Then she would have shot at the stairs where the shadow would be, not at the portrait. No, there must be a more logical explanation."

"There is no logical explanation. Tante Berenice wanders in her mind."

"Tell me one thing," Roger said thoughtfully. "Was your father in uniform when he married?"

Lily started. She stared at Roger in amazement. "I don't know. Yes, I think he was. What does that matter?"

Sensing only an illuminating idea lay just ahead, oblivious to the obvious implications, Roger went on with his speculation. "Maybe it *was* your father Tante Berenice was looking for. Maybe she didn't think it was your wedding, but his wedding, the one that took place fifty years ago."

Lily's face suddenly contorted; her cheeks lost color. She rose from her seat just as the train stopped in the Gare Montparnasse and slapped Roger hard many times. He had to push her violently, so that she fell back on the seat, before he could get out of the compartment and flee down the platform. He ran a long time through the streets without looking back until he was at last safe in his own room, where everything was, he thanked God, exactly as he had left it—tidy and sensibly arranged.

Contributors

ALMA ROBERTS GIORDAN writes from her home in Watertown, Connecticut that she "was (and is) a poet before she began to write fiction, and has made it from SRL down — but no book." Another story of hers will appear in a forthcoming issue of four quarters. SARGE D. STERLING, a Philadelphian, says, "It's a wonderful feeling to have a poem acknowledged and accepted . . . they are rare events." PHILIPP FEHL's article was originally presented as a talk to teachers of art. He teaches art history at the University of Nebraska. SAMUEL HAZO, teacher and administrator at Duquesne University, is one of the outstanding younger American poets. IRVING L. ZUPNICK is professor of art history, Harpur College, Endicott, N.Y. ANTHONY LAUCK, C.S.C. is head of the department of art at the University of Notre Dame. BEN SCHLEIFER, chairman of English, Central High School, is a prominent teacher in the Philadelphia school system. WALTER J. ONG, S.J., professor of English at St. Louis University, is a fellow for 1961-1962 at the Center for Advanced Studies, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. SISTER M. GENEVIEVE, R.S.M. teaches at McAuley High School, Toledo, Ohio. WILFRID SHEED is at present in Malaga, Spain. RÉMY SAISSELIN, member of the American Society for Aesthetics and assistant editor of its journal, is at the Cleveland Museum of Art. GERHARD ALBERSHEIM, associate professor of music at Los Angeles State College, says, ". . . the fate of the arts, particularly music, is constantly on my mind." THOMAS P. McDONNELL, writer and literary critic, is working on a book of poems. He lives in Massachusetts. SISTER MARY JANET, S.C.L. had a poem in the November, 1961 issue of this magazine. CHARLES EDWARD EATON, poet and fiction writer, is the author of a book of stories of Brazil, *Write Me from Rio*. ROBERT A. WIGGINS, member of the English staff at the University of California at Davis, is revising his book on Mark Twain and finishing a short novel, both of which he hopes to have finished by the end of the year. GEORGE HERMAN, member of the Department of English, University of Nevada, will have a playlet published by Purdue University's *First Stage* in the fall of 1962. VICTOR CHAPIN is author of three books and a host of stories, most of which have appeared in American magazines. He lives in New York City. RICHARD E. FITZGERALD and JOHN J. KEENAN are assistant professors of English and EUGENE J. FITZGERALD, an assistant professor of philosophy, at La Salle College.

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